

It was a honor to assist three families from my District as they waited to hear news on their loved ones. Fortunately, the families and friends of Petty Officer Kevin Benoit of Cairo, NY, Ensign & Deck Division Commander Gregory McDearmon of Ballston Lake, NY, and Chief Petty Officer Charles Sweet of Broadalbin, NY, after hours of waiting, received word that their loved ones were safe.

It is important that we always remember that these brave men and women are serving our Nation and we should pay tribute to them. These sailors have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. This is a loss felt by the entire nation.

This tragedy highlights the constant dangers faced by our armed forces around the world. Our country must remain vigilant in protecting them from future terrorist or other attacks. Our government must work diligently to protect and provide aid to those who are injured and work with the families who are going through a period of grieving.

Again, Mr. Speaker, our prayers go out to the sailors, their families and friends.

IN MEMORY OF BETTY BANKS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of a beloved citizen of the Fourth Congressional District and a dear friend, the late Betty Jean Henderson Banks of Ivanhoe, Texas, who passed away earlier this year. Betty was a wonderful woman whose kindness and dedication to her family, friends, and community will be long remembered.

Born in Louisiana to the late Lafayette Victor Henderson and Ida Butler Starke Henderson, Betty married James Walter Banks in 1938 in Bonham, Texas. Throughout her years in Bonham, Betty raised a family and worked tirelessly on behalf of her community. Betty was known by many for her work at the Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center in Bonham, where she worked in food service. She also was known throughout Bonham for her volunteer efforts on numerous causes, from making uniforms for the Missionettes (Girls Club) to helping find and fight for a liver transplant for a baby in need. Betty was an integral part of a women's prayer group that met monthly for a prayer breakfast at the First National Bank in Bonham, and she was a member of the First Pentecostal Church of God in Bonham.

In the local paper, this was written about Betty by Mrs. Paul Keahey: "Over the years she stood up for truth and honesty at all levels of society and government and what she believed to be right." These sentiments were echoed by her many friends and fellow citizens who knew her and loved her.

Betty is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, James V. "Butch" Banks and Carol of Baytown; two daughters and sons-in-law, Kathy and Mike Stockton of Ravenna and Becky and Victor Santiago of West Haven, Conn.; and a brother, Robert H. Henderson of

Colville, Wash. She is also survived by seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, James Walter Banks, who passed away in 1996; a granddaughter, Amanda Stockton; brother, L. Victor Henderson, and a sister, Yvonne Henderson.

Betty was an honest and loyal friend to many and a role model in her community. We will miss her—but her legacy will live on in the lives of all those whom she touched with her generosity and kindness. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn today, may we do so in memory of this beloved citizen of Fannin County, Betty Banks.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HUNTINGDON VALLEY

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Huntingdon Valley in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

The First Baptist Church of Huntingdon Valley was established in 1900. The first two decades of the century were years of intense recruitment as new Christians were being sought, baptized, and organized into a church body. The founder and first pastor, the Reverend Price David Chandler, united two small groups, a home-based weekly prayer meeting and a home-based Sunday School class, to form the nucleus of the church.

Through World War I, the church remained intact and served as a place of worship for the community suffering from national unrest and disrupted family lives. During this time, the building experienced a series of remodelings and renovations including the installation of electric lighting, stained glass windows, a metal ceiling, pews to replace chairs, and central heating.

The 1930s brought the Great Depression and First Baptist established a system of dues whereby members were considered in good standing if they paid 25 cents each month on Communion Sunday. In 1937 after 37 years of faithful service, Reverend Chandler passed away.

The spirit of First Baptist Church was tested in the 1940s as a result of World War II. Attendance was unstable because young men were drafted into the military and other members, both men and women, worked in defense plants with irregular and demanding hours. Despite the hard times, First Baptist remained in business.

The 1960s were a time of renewal for the church. A Vacation Bible School was initiated and the First Baptist Church installed its fourth pastor, the Reverend Howard Cartwright, Jr., whose intense interest was missionary work. The congregation became acquainted with missionaries from far and near, serving in both foreign and domestic areas.

In 1997, the First Baptist Church of Huntingdon Valley installed its current pastor, the Reverend Bruce Wayne Petty, Sr., whose very

vigorous, enthusiastic teaching and preaching ministry increase spiritual insights necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

As one of the oldest churches in Montgomery County, First Baptist demonstrates how commitment and dedication can lead to a prosperous and successful church. The history that surrounds the First Baptist Church of Huntingdon Valley is unparalleled and it is a privilege to recognize this extraordinary parish on the occasion of its 100th Anniversary.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN IN THE 21ST CENTURY

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I have the opportunity to voice my strong concern over the lack of legislation being passed to improve the deterioration of our nation's schools.

During the 106th Congress, I authored H.R. 415 and I co-sponsored H.R. 1660, H.R. 1960, H.R. 3874, and H.R. 4094. Each of these bills, if the majority party permitted them to be considered, would have facilitated school construction—an issue that can no longer be overlooked by the federal government.

H.R. 415, my Expand and Rebuild America's Schools Act, will encourage new school and classroom construction through the creation of a new class of tax-exempt bonds. These bonds are similar to the Qualified Zone Academy bonds created in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 for the purpose of school renovation. My bill focuses on using these new bonds specifically for the construction of new classrooms and schools, and to assist overcrowded, high growth rate schools that are struggling to adequately house their students.

H.R. 415 will assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with limited financial resources to combat major overcrowding problems due to increasing enrollment. The program provides interest-free capital to LEAs by giving a tax credit to the financial institution in the amount equal to the interest that would otherwise be paid. The local school district is then required to repay only the principal amount borrowed. The Secretary of Education will be responsible for direct distribution of the bond program to the LEAs, avoiding any state bureaucracy in funding decisions or program administration.

Let's examine the facts about the conditions of our schools. Between 2000 and 2010, the average national increase of public high school students is 10%, with an expected increase of 15% in my home state of California. This year, 53 million children will enter public and private elementary and secondary schools in the United States. By 2020, the Department of Education estimates that about 55 million children will be enrolled in our nation's schools, with this number increasing to 60 million by 2030.

In California alone, the Department of Education projects that elementary and secondary school enrollment will increase by 4.6% over the next 10 years. This ranks 12th among states with the largest expected increases. On a more local level, Orange County has already

experienced a 30.9% increase in the enrollment of elementary and secondary school students from 1990–1998.

The bottom line here is that we have a growing population of students, and we do not have the infrastructure in place to properly accommodate all of them. These are frightening statistics for the future of our nation. It is our responsibility to our children to take action on this matter immediately. We wouldn't think of sending our men and women in the armed services into a battle without the best training they can be supplied. Why are we sending our children into this global economy and competitive world with less than the best preparation? This is indeed an issue of national security for the United States.

Let's forget about the future for a moment and focus on where we are putting our children now. In a study issued by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on the conditions of public schools, three-quarters of all schools reported the need to spend money on repairs, renovations, and modernization to bring their school buildings into good overall condition. Approximately one-fifth of schools indicated less than adequate conditions for life safety features, roofs, and electric power. They also reported that 43% of the schools reported that at least one of six environmental factors was in unsatisfactory condition. Moreover, about 36% of schools indicated that they used portable classrooms.

But wait, it gets worse. NCES also reports that 78% of all schools in rural America need to be repaired and modernized. Nearly one-half (47%) of all schools in rural America have unsatisfactory environmental conditions. Over 30% report inadequate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

How do we expect our students to improve their performance if we are not meeting their basic needs? The National Education Association estimates that the total funding need for public school modernization is \$321.9 billion. Of that total, \$268.2 billion is needed for school infrastructures and \$53.7 billion is needed for education technologies.

We must take action now to enable us to provide the best education possible for our current and future students. We must pass legislation that will facilitate the construction and repair of our nations public schools. We must strongly consider passing legislation like H.R. 415. The majority party in the Congress should make this a priority—not put it on a back burner.

We can't afford to waste any more time. While we fight about the cost and the most effective ways to improve our schools, there is a student in California who can't go out to play because her playground is now filled with portable classrooms. While we struggle to realize that this is an issue of the highest priority, a student in New York is walking around a trash can in the middle of the hall that is catching the rain water falling from a leaky roof. Let's not wait any longer.

My fellow colleagues, let's pass legislation that will allow our students to learn and our teachers to teach in a safe, clean, uncrowded environment. I truly believe that the future economic health and security of our nation depends upon it.

TRIBUTE TO J.R. CURTIS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of an exceptional man, an outstanding community leader and beloved citizen of Longview, Texas, the late J.R. Curtis, whose life was cut short at the age of 55 following a motorcycle accident on September 2 in Durango, Colorado. J.R. lived life with enthusiasm—and with a tremendous devotion to his family, his community, his friends and his faith. He leaves a remarkable legacy of professional and civic accomplishments—as well as a legacy of loving relationships with his family and many friends.

J.R. was born on August 18, 1945, to James R. Curtis, Sr., and Sarah DeRue Armstrong Curtis of Longview. He graduated from Longview High School in 1963 and graduated from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth in 1967. He also attended the American Institute of Foreign Trade in Glendale, Ariz., from 1967–68.

J.R. was a successful and popular radio broadcaster in Longview. He purchased KFRO AM/FM radio station from his father in 1986 and was the owner and manager until 1998. He also became owner of KLSQ-FM and operated KNYN in Santa Fe, N.M. He began his broadcasting career in high school, working for his father's station as sportscaster for KFRO's Wednesday night Teen Time Program. He learned all aspects of the radio business, from engineering to news and sales, at an early age.

J.R. was active in the Texas Association of Broadcasters, serving as a medium market director for TAB and as president of TAB. He was named Texas Broadcaster of the Year in 1990. He also was active at the national level, serving as a member of the National Association of Broadcasters Blitz Committee and as a director of NAB in Washington, DC, from 1996–99.

In addition to broadcasting, J.R. served as president of the Curtis Foundation, president of Workmans Oil Co., and a director of First Federal Savings Bank of Longview from 1982–1997. At the time of his death, he was employed as a consultant with Longview Economic Development Corp.

J.R. served nine years on the Longview City Council, from 1975–1984. In 1977 he became the youngest mayor in Texas when he was appointed by the council at age 33 to the city's top job. His recent community involvement included serving as president and vice president of Longview 20/20 Forum; finance chairman of Longview Museum of Fine Arts, 1997; director of Longview Partnership, 1995–98; and a member of the administrative board of First United Methodist Church, 1996–98. He had a 19-year perfect attendance record in the Longview Rotary Club, where for many years he kept the membership informed of local and national news.

Other involvements included serving as president of Gregg County Housing Finance Corp., executive committee member for the East Texas Council of Governments, director

of Little Cypress Utility District, director of the Longview Chamber of Commerce, foundation board member of Good Shepherd Medical Center, foundation board member of LeTourneau University, board member of Crisman Preparatory School and a volunteer for many other organizations. He was a member of the Collier Sunday School Class at First United Methodist Church and an usher at the church.

J.R. is survived by his loving wife of 33 years, Sue Skaggs Curtis; his son and daughter-in-law, Jason Skaggs Curtis and Janey of Fort Worth; his daughter, Elizabeth Ann Curtis of Longview; granddaughter, Margaret Lynn of Fort Worth; his aunt, Ruth Elizabeth Curtis Gray of Longview; mother-in-law, Fredna Skaggs of Longview; brother-in-law Bill Hodges of Longview and brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Lucas of Longview; two nephews and a niece, and other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Elizabeth DeRue Curtis Hodges.

J.R. had biked to Durango with five friends for an annual getaway vacation. He died as he had lived—with enthusiasm for life and for friendship. He will long be remembered for the significant contributions he made to his beloved city of Longview. As his wife and high school sweetheart, Sue Curtis, noted, "He loved Longview. He believed in Longview. He was born here and went to school here and wanted to make it a better place."

And he did. J.R.'s influence can be found everywhere in Longview—and will be felt for years to come. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn today, let us do so in celebration of the life of this wonderful man and citizen of Longview, Texas—J.R. Curtis, whose memory will be cherished in the hearts and minds of those who knew him and loved him.

RECOGNIZING MS. KARIN M. ORBON PARTICIPANT IN THE 2000 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING EXCHANGE PROGRAM

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of Ms. Karin M. Orbon. Ms. Orbon has been selected to participate in the 2000 Awards for Excellence in Teaching exchange program between the United States and six countries in the former Soviet Union. Ms. Orbon will be visiting Russia as a member of the 23 teacher U.S. delegation.

The teachers chosen for this assignment were selected from a pool of educators who had previously been honored for their excellence in teaching through such programs as the annual U.S. Teacher of the Year Award and the Milken Educator Awards. Ms. Orbon, a computer, business and accounting teacher at North Brookfield High School is a recipient of the Milken award.

The Milken Family Foundation was established in 1982 to support education and health care nationwide. The Milken Educator Awards